Rotten Apple

Beautiful Outside Rotten Inside

M.Farin

Rotten Apple

by M.Farin

A Fictional Psychological Thriller Novel

Content Warning

This book contains strong language, violence, disturbing themes, psychological elements, and depictions of war that may be unsettling to some readers.

Rotten Apple is a mixture of imagination and reflections inspired by reality. While some ideas in this story are influenced by real-world issues and emotions, the characters, events, and situations are fictional and written for artistic and storytelling purposes.

This story is not meant to glorify violence or darkness, but to explore the hidden sides of human nature.

Any resemblance to real individuals or events, beyond historical references, is purely coincidental.

This book doesn't glorify Nazis.

Author's Note

"An apple only becomes rotten because of the germs within it."

This line became the backbone of this book when I noticed the similarities between a rotten apple and this Earth. I began to wonder if people are the germs responsible for rotting this beautiful planet. As a first-time writer, creating this book felt both exciting and deeply personal to me. Every chapter carries a piece of my ideology."

~ M.Farin

-- Rotten Apple --

By M.Farin

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Chapter 1

Prologue

1943, World War II was at its peak. Every nation is going insane just to show their dominance. Every German household is going through a lot every day. Hundreds of thousands of people are dying. No one can sleep when tomorrow isn't guaranteed. Everyone is losing something, but it is certain that most of the losses have been faced by the poor. Most of the men have been recruited by the government to work for the Army, and getting your hands on bread is not easy.

Emma's husband has been recruited for the army. It's been 18 days without any letter from her husband. Tired and sad, she lit up Her 4th cigarette of the day. She wasn't showing, but the thoughts of her husband were killing her from inside. Not wasting a second, she started walking towards the only milk seller in the county. She bought the last bottle of milk using the last bit of money she had.

While walking through the alley, she smelled a really bad smell of rotting. The smell was so bad that she almost threw up. It was the smell of a human body torn apart. Its wounds were covered with maggots. The body was there for more than 2 weeks, just rotting.

She ran past that as fast as she probably could. After some time, she reached her home. She opened the rusty door. The clanking of the door made her child, Fredrick, cry. She held Fredrick in her...

Arms and started feeding him. After some time, little Fredrick was asleep again. Emma was exhausted but still, she unfolded the newspaper on the first page. The headline read, "World War II Becomes More Fierce Due to Use of Bio Weapon." Her mind was really fucked up, but there wasn't anything she could do. She fell asleep on the sofa out of exhaustion.

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Chapter 2

Prey & Predator

Eathan was the last one of his battalion. His eyes looked tired. He knew that he was about to die. It was the truth that couldn't be changed.

Eathan's life had never been good. He was half American and half German, but he didn't really care about any nation. "I have killed many without even listening to what they have to say.

I remember when an American soldier begged me to spare his life and started crying, tears running down his face. His eyes were covered with fear. His skin had almost gone pale. He started loudly screaming at me, 'I have a sister. She has a brain tumor. Please let me go.'

I didn't want to do it, but I did. In just a blink of an eye, he fell to the ground. His lifeless eyes stared at me like they had something to say to me," said Eathan to himself.

Now Eathan was also in a similar situation. The enemy troops were advancing towards him. Eathan's face looked emotionless, thinking about Fredrick.

"Fredrick hasn't even seen me once. I wish I could hold him and stay for a little longer," said Eathan.

He knew that his time was up. Scared of being tortured, he took a dull blade out of his dead comrade's pocket. The blade was dull. He stabbed himself with it, but the dullness made the process slow and painful. It took multiple stabs, but he wasn't fully dead.

The enemy troops reached him, full of anger. Eathan was barely alive. They noticed Eathan wasn't fully

dead, and their anger got the better of them.
One of the soldiers spat on Eathan's face.
"Bastard. What else would you have thought will happen, you son of a bitch?" said the soldier.
Everybody started laughing. One of the soldiers took a boulder and smashed Eathan's head. He smashed Eathan's head with the boulder until Eathan could not be recognized by anyone.
EATHAN WAS DEAD.

"Not All Heroes Have Good Ending"

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Chapter 3

Neitherland

"I was dead... or was I? Where is this place?" Ethan asked, panicking.
It was a strange place, nothing like Earth. The place was too quiet and empty. Ethan saw a well in the distance. He was confused but started walking toward it, his mind filled with overthinking and anxiety.
He finally reached the well. When he bent down to look inside, he heard a voice.
"Don't do it."
Ethan pulled out his pistol and fired the only round he had left at something that looked like a glowing white silhouette of a man. It didn't have any facial features, but it resembled a human.
The bullet didn't work on him, as if it went straight through him. Ethan didn't know what was happening.
"Don't move, you asshole!" Ethan shouted. Stranger: "Oh, don't call me that. I'm not going to kill you."

Ethan: "What the hell even are you?"

Stranger: "You weren't supposed to ask me that. You're in my house."

Ethan: "Stay back! I'm not joking around, you fucking monster."

Stranger: "Oh, come on. I'm not going to eat you."

Ethan lowered his weapon. The Stranger looked harmless. Its aura felt positive, Ethan thought.
"So, are you one of those humans?" asked the Stranger.
"I think so," Ethan replied.
The Stranger and Ethan already felt somewhat familiar with each other. They sat down near the well.
The Stranger asked, "These tired eyes of yours are telling me that you are fed up with everything, Ethan."
Ethan nodded and, with a sigh of relief, asked, "So, what's your name?"

Stranger: "I never had one... or nobody ever asked me."

Ethan: "I mean, that's sad, but I can give you a name."

Stranger: "I don't know. I am having a conversation after almost 200 years."

Ethan: "How does Lukas sound?"

Lukas: "I like it."

Ethan: "So, would you like me to ask about your family?"

Lukas: "Family? Nobody is here. I was just alone, but now you are here."

Ethan: "This place is unfamiliar. Is this hell, or is it heaven?"

Lukas: "It's neither."

Ethan: "I don't get it."

Lukas started telling Ethan about this place.
"This place..." Lukas said. "It's called Neither Land because it is neither Heaven nor Hell. This place doesn't have anything. It's just a blank canvas with a well. It was created by gods and demons. People rarely come here. You are the third person to arrive here, Ethan."
Ethan felt a bit relieved.
They exchanged many stories, but when Lukas asked, "What is Earth like as a realm?" Ethan's smile slowly faded. He looked terrified.
"It's worse than Hell," Ethan replied. "The people there are demons. They will suck the last drop of blood from your soul. They create problems and then pretend to solve them. Humans, as a society, can never live in peace. My family was suffering. My newborn child... they are in a pathetic situation."
"If I could, I would change the world and make people live in peace."
Lukas smiled.
"You must have some guts to say that."
Ethan lowered his head.

"I see humans but no humanity." said Ethan

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Chapter 4

Clash

"We have similar ideologies," said Lukas. "I lived with gods, but my life wasn't that precious to them. They only care about someone who bows to them. I wasn't one of them. They don't praise anyone who asks questions, and they don't care about any human. They think of humans as pets. It doesn't matter what you do; they will always look down on you.
My father was a demigod and a human, and my mother was a goddess, making me a demigod.
The hierarchy in heaven creates levels in society and exploits the lower-tier gods. We have somewhat similar experiences."

Lukas: "Hey, do you see the well?"

Ethan: "This is the only thing here. Is it special?"

Lukas: "It's a wishing well. If you want to change the world, you can try, but your actions will have consequences."
Ethan didn't said a word.
Lukas said to Ethan, "The things that don't have price tags are worthless. Worthless things don't mean they are less valuable; it means they are more valuable than anything."
Lukas tossed a total of three gold coins toward Ethan.
Ethan asked, "What are they for?"
Calmly, Lukas replied, "To change the world."
Confused, Ethan replied, "How am I going to change the world with these?"

"The well is there to serve a purpose, Ethan. Your world is rotten. Go ahead, change it. Let your life be meaningful to others, even if they don't remember you. Don't disappoint me, Ethan. I am counting on you," said Lukas seriously.
He told Ethan that the well was a wishing well and gave him instructions on how to make any wish.

Rules of the Wishing Well

(Readers are advised to read this to better understand the story)

1. One coin is worth 1 wish.
2. Wish will only affect the Earth of a person's timeline.
3. If the second wish contradicts the first wish, the first wish will be considered null.
4. If the user fails to complete their motive, the world will return to its original form.
5. All wishes will have their consequences.
6. Dead people can't wish for rebirth

Ethan was overthinking.
"I am not extraordinary. I am just a regular guy, a beginner. I can't control this power."
Lukas had enough.
He grabbed Ethan by his collar and slapped him hard.
"Listen to me, you fuckhead!"

Ethan: "I was out of my mind. His expression... it broke something inside me. I tried to stop him, but it didn't seem like he gave a fuck."

Lukas: "Look at you. You are a loser, Ethan. You said you wanted peace, huh?"
Lukas was going insane at this point. He slammed Ethan onto the ground. A lump of blood burst from Ethan's mouth.

I wasn't resisting. It wasn't that I couldn't fight him; I simply didn't want to.
Lukas said,
"Look at you, you fuck. You said you wanted peace. The price of peace cannot be paid, you understand, Ethan. Those bloody humans won't remember you. Why would they? You didn't leave your mark on that shitty world of yours. Ask yourself."
"Ethan, who needs a change in that world—me or you?"

It felt like Lukas was having fun beating me. He shouted questions at me. I couldn't answer any of them. My mind just shut down.
I stayed on the ground like a pile of trash. He beat the hell out of me and threw those three coins onto my face. Then Lukas vanished into the emptiness of that world.
I was in a pathetic state. Blood constantly ran down my nose and mouth.

I was alone in a world full of emptiness.
My eyes blacked out.
It was the last thing I remembered.

Chapter 5

1st Wish

Ethan was unconscious for almost 50+ hours. After that, when he woke up, he was pretty tired. The blood dried on his face and clothes. He reached towards the well and saw his face. Upon seeing his reflection, he said to himself—he was talking to himself—
"Look at you, you bastard. You look miserable. You have the power to change the world, but here you are looking at yourself for sympathy, you bloody asshole."

While cursing myself, I remembered—all my past. I thought about Emma. She was still suffering in that world. She never let me down. Even when I was at my lowest, she was there for me. No one gave a fuck about a cheap-ass dude with nothing to his name.
I used to drink a lot. Nobody was there to guide me. My mother died during childbirth because the doctors at hospitals didn't care about the poor. She never even saw my face, nor did I.

My dad, he was beaten to death by some random goons; they stole his only valuable thing, his chain. I wasn't guided by anyone. Nobody even wanted me to stay alive, but Emma—she never cared about anyone else, she simply ignored everyone and married me.
I changed a lot. Then I became a father. Me and Emma had Friedrich. I was the happiest man you can say, but World War II poured water on everything I had...

Ethan washed his face with water mixed with tears. He had the chance to change the world now. Ethan snapped. He picked the coins, went up to the well, and tossed one coin in the well.

The well showed the current state of the world. Germany was losing; blasts were happening everywhere, and fumes were coming from Ethan's hometown.

After seeing his hometown in flames, Ethan, not caring about the world, just wanted his wife and child to roam anywhere they wanted. Ethan had enough of this war. He closed his eyes and said, "I wish for World War II to end now."
World War II ended on Earth like it had never existed. Ethan sighed in relief.

Dear Readers

You are advised to read this to understand the difference in time between Neither Land and Earth.

When a user's wish gets granted, it shows users the things that were happening in the meantime. It shows the user that like a documentary. For example: 1 year of Earth's time can be seen in Neither Land in 120 hours. The documentary carries on until the user orders it to stop or asks another wish.

Ethan saw in the well: she was Emma holding Friedrich. Friedrich looks a lot older than Ethan remembers—he looks almost 3 years old

...but Friedrich's legs look weird. Emma, leaving Friedrich on the bed, goes to another room and takes out a wheelchair. The picture becomes clearer now. Friedrich was disabled; his legs didn't work.

Emma left the wheelchair; she was looking at something. It was a family photo of Ethan, Emma, and Friedrich. She picked up a piece of cloth and cleaned the picture.

Emma lit a cigarette and smoked for a while. She looked like she was preparing for something. Ethan had no idea what Emma was trying to do.
Emma walked out of the house with Friedrich in the wheelchair. She was taking every step so carefully, like she was in fear of something. She stopped at a beaten-up building. After a while...

the door opened. An old guy asked Emma to come in. Emma went in. It looked like the old guy was a doctor. He started checking Friedrich, and when he was doing some tests, Emma asked the doctor about the "Holocaust" and "The Nazi Euthanasia Program."

The doctor told her to lower her voice. They said that the Nazi army was committing genocide of Jews and called this program "Holocaust." Not only Jews, but also Germans were unsafe. Nazis were killing disabled children, adults, and mentally ill people, among many others. They justified these killings using ideas of burden and purity, calling it "Aktion T4."

As they were talking, the door busted open. It was a Nazi soldier, fully armed. The doctor tried to explain himself, but it was too late.

Soldier: "Shut up, you dicksucker! Do I really look like a guy who cares?"

Doctor: "Don't harm the child. I mean you no harm."

Soldier: "Fuck off! That little rat is just a burden on this nation."

The soldier aimed his gun at Friedrich, but at the last moment, the doctor, in his desperate attempt to save Friedrich, tackled the soldier, slamming him down on the floor. He tried to snatch the weapon out of his hand, but the soldier's...
reflexes were fast. He took out his combat knife and stabbed it into his neck. His blood was all over the floor. The soldier stood up, his eyes looking like those of a predator. He aimed his pistol towards Emma. Emma had accepted her fate; his face went pale.

But then, a bullet pierced through the soldier's head, then another one on his back, and then 5 more. The soldier fell onto the ground.
A bearded man wearing a long-sleeve coat walked in. He referred to himself as "Andreas Becker." He bent down a little and checked the soldier, while a frightened Emma and crying Friedrich were sitting there.
He took the soldier's gun and threw it at Emma. "Pick it up," said Andreas. Emma picked up the gun and pointed it towards Andreas. "Leave us alone!" shouted Emma in a broken voice. He walked toward Emma, grabbed the barrel of the gun, and pointed it at his forehead.

Andreas: "Do it, if you've got the guts."

Emma: "Don't you dare harm my child!"

Andreas: "Shoot me, or else I am gonna shoot you and your son."

I was in a "kill or get killed" situation. Although, if it wasn't for my son, I still wouldn't even resist. But now it's enough. I gathered enough courage and pressed the trigger, but it didn't fire. I tried again and again, but Andreas stopped me.

Andreas: "You've got the guts I have been looking for."

Emma: "Get straight to the point."

Andreas: "I am the leader of a rebellion group called 'Edelweiss,' and I want you to join it."

Emma: "I just can't."

Andreas: "Do it for your child. You were lucky that I saved you today, but in the future, I won't be there."

Emma: "If it wasn't for Friedrich, I wouldn't do it. I am in.

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Chapter 6

Edelweiss

I was the 7th member of the Edelweiss group. It had 5 men and 2 women including me. I'd only been with them for 3 weeks, but it felt like a family. I ate with them, drank with them, and smoked with them.

Andreas told us about our main plan of killing an important Nazi commander to set an example. Our mission was to assassinate "Reinhard Heydrich" during his public speech in Prague (Czech Republic).
Andreas invited all 7 of us to a party 1 day before our plan and said, "Don't miss it, this could be your last party."
One day prior to the party, I was smoking on my roof later that night when a guy with a hat and trench coat said my name. I instantly pointed my gun at him.
"Don't even try," he said to me. "Friedrich is with our soldiers."
One soldier came up the stairs, and Friedrich was in his hands at gunpoint.

Soldier: "So you are one of those rebels? Don't lie."

Emma: "Yes, I am."

Soldier: "Listen to me, you bitch. If you want good for your children, you have to betray your group. And after we kill those anti-nationals including you, I promise we will raise your son. Your son will live a normal life. I can make some exceptions from T4.

Emma: "I can't betray them. Andreas is like a godfather to my child."

Soldier: "Well, then this fellow is going to have a short life. Poor boy."

He said it with such a cold heart that my mouth automatically agreed. I knew I was wrong, but Friedrich's safety was what I wanted all along. He said to me, "By all members, I mean all members."

I traded my team's and my own life for a chance of my baby living. He asked my plans; I told him about the party and our assassination plan of Reinhard Heydrich in Prague. He said, "See you at the party," and left with Friedrich. I didn't sleep that night. How could I?

The next day, Emma went to the party at the planned spot. She was late; everyone was already there. They all were having drinks and snacks. drunken Andreas stood on a barrel and shouted, "Welcome to the party, Emma! Are you having fun?"
Approvingly nodded, Emma.

As they were talking, they had a knock on the door, but all 7 members were already there. They were hesitating to open the door. Emma knew who it was, but she stayed quiet. The knocking became louder now.

Ernst, the only guy who wasn't drunk and had weapons with him, signaled everyone to lay low or hide. He went to the door with his pistol in his hand, ready to act. He opened the door, and the moment he saw that uniform, he shot that soldier instantly.But there was a whole battalion; they all shot Ernst back-to-back.

killing, Ernst. The whole battalion advanced inside the place.
Karl (best friend of Ernst), enraged, tried to stealth-kill their commander. He stabbed the commander in the shoulder, but it looked like he had no effect. He took Ernst as hostage at gunpoint. He said, "If you don't come out, I'm gonna blow this fellow's head." Annie said, "Fuck you, Ernst! You shouldn't have revealed your location, dickhead. Now we all are fucked."
We had nothing else we could do. We came out; they tied our hands at our back. He killed Ernst. Blood splattered all over us in the blink of an eye; Ernst became a headless body.

Commander: "This is what happens to rebels."

Annie: "Fuck you, I don't care. Kill me if you want, you bastard."

Commander: "I decide whether you live or die. You are nobody."

Leon: "Shut up! I have nothing to lose. This is the day I'll die for my motherland!"
Leon, with his hands tied, ran towards the commander, bashing his head on the commander's stomach. He ran towards other soldiers, but he got shot upright on his forehead.

Viktor looked terrified. He laid on the feet of the commander and started crying, asking for his mercy, and started licking his feet.

Viktor: "Let me go, please, and you'll never see me with these bastards again, I swear, sir!"

Commander: "If you want mercy, run!"

Viktor did exactly what the commander said. We all knew what was gonna happen. As Viktor was running, he showered him with bullets.
"Armes Schwein," said the commander and spat at Viktor's body.

Andreas, eyes wide open seeing his crew get torn apart without mercy, his face covered with the blood of his friends. All 3 of us knew our fate.
The commander came towards Emma and said, "So you didn't lie."
Annie and Andreas were shocked. Annie screamed at Emma, "My parents fucking died so that I can run! They sacrificed themselves for me! I thought you were my friend, and you betrayed us!"

Her voice cracked; she coughed, and the commander said, "Enough talking," and stabbed Annie in her neck. He cut Annie's head off with his dagger and threw it at us.
Emma asked the commander, "Before killing me, just tell me: is Friedrich safe?"
The commander laughed. "If you want to see if he is safe, go see him in heaven," and shot Emma.

[Andreas Perspective]

I was alone, surrounded with dead bodies and blood.

Commander: "Mr. Reinhard ordered me to give you a beautiful death."

Andreas: "Kill me already. At this point, I won't resist. I have nothing left to live for."

Commander: "Scream, cry, and ask me for mercy."

Andreas: "What would I do with mercy of yours?"

Commander: "Let's get it over with. It's my pleasure to end the Edelweiss gang."

The commander came up to Andreas and asked any last words.
Andreas said, "Good bye."
The commander put his 12-gauge shotgun in Andreas's mouth and released the trigger.

Commander: "Dann hau ab."

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Chapter 7

Fighter?

I saw my wife and my son die. I was paranoid of myself. I was in deep guilt, my brain working overtime to comprehend what had happened. My head was hurting like hell. Seeing my reflection in the water, I saw myself as a killer.

That killer was staring at me. I tightened my knuckles. I wanted to punch him as hard as I physically could, and that's what I did. The splash of water on my face got me back on my nerves.

I couldn't wait for long; if I did, paranoia would have gotten the better of me. I had to make another wish, and I had to be more selfish, although I did want to save my hometown, but that desire was nothing compared to my family. I had only 2 coins left.

I tried to sleep, but the screams of my wife and the helpless cries of my child wouldn't let me. I had completely lost track of time. My under-eyes became darker, but I got to the well, took out the coin from my shirt's pocket, and threw it in the well as before.

Although my hand was vibrating as if it didn't want me to do it, I threw it and said:

"I want my family to leave this country and go to the USA, far away from this war."

And once again, my wish was granted. I saw my family. I saw Emma packing her clothes and other essentials.Emma was done packing her items; Friedrich was asleep. Emma looked back at her house and her country. Then, with a buzzing sound, an old-model Jeep showed up. A man got out of the Jeep, and after a short conversation, Emma with Friedrich got into the Jeep. Emma sat at the back and lit a cigarette. In a matter of time, they reached the port.

Emma saw a ship at the dock with bold letters written on it: "M.S. St. Louis". Emma boarded the ship, and the captain announced:Greetings, passengers! I am Captain Gustav, and you are currently standing on M.S. St. Louis. We will reach New York, America, through the Atlantic Ocean. If the weather cooperates with us, we will be there in less than a week. The journey can take anywhere from 5 to 10 days."

And their journey started. The first 2 days were normal, but on the 3rd day, the weather didn't look good. The sea was looking calm, but it was the calmness before the storm.

Although nothing happened on day 3, only a few people got sea sickness. On days 4 and 5, it rained, sea waves rising higher every minute. People in the lower-class cabins were facing losses and a situation of panic started to form. Emma was safe till now, but things took a bad turn on the 7th day, when an elderly passenger got the flu. Through that one guy, the flu slowly but steadily spread, and Emma and some others of her batch got the flu.

Emma's Perspective

I did know what was going on, but I didn't know I had the flu at first. It was coughing, and I felt a bit ill, but I shrugged it off and thought nothing more of it.
It became hard to control when the cold of the Atlantic got into my lungs, and the disease became more dominant. I knew I had the disease, and there I was with only bad options in front of me, and trust me when I say this, but they weren't good at all. I had a bad disease and still one and a half days left to reach New York . I didn't wanted the disease to spread to Friedrich . But if I didn't feed Friedrich he may not be able to make it alive. There was nothing I could do.

I saw with my own eyes how people fall under pressure. I saw people breaking their morals, and in that crumbling society, I saw well-maintained people act like animals. I really didn't want any of that, but only for my child.
I tried not to cough or sneeze near Friedrich, and I tried everything, but the cold breeze of the Atlantic and the damp, soggy weather made it worse for me. I knew my illness had also spread to Friedrich, but I tried making a fool of myself. My health was ruined at this point.
It was almost midnight. I saw Friedrich sweating in his sleep, and not long after, he woke up and threw up. My heart was pounding faster than a cheetah. I held him in my arms and cried my heart out.
For that night, I barely slept, and for most of the night, I cried. I blamed myself for the things happening to Friedrich.

During my mental breakdown, sunrose, and I heard Captain Gustav announce that in 3 hours we would reach New York.

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Chapter 8

Setting Sun

Note

From this point onward, whenever Emma speaks with an American or anyone who does not speak German, the dialogue will be written in English for the reader's convenience. However, Emma is actually speaking German, not English. Only the language on the page has been translated.

The dialogue of English-speaking characters will be underlined.

After days of mental tiredness, losing belief in myself, and suffering, I finally saw a light of hope. I saw "Ellis Island" in the distance, and not long after, I reached there.
All of the passengers got off the ship, and I ran straight towards the immigration office, but there was a long line before me, and most of the sick people were going to the 2nd screening of Visa.
Friedrich's condition was becoming worse every hour. Even though I was also really weakened and sick, I couldn't have cared less for myself. I begged people to let me cut them in line.

People weren't kind enough; they told me to leave. People declined; I didn't have time to ask everyone. I ran straight to the immigration officer, but the officer said,Ma'am, I can't check your papers now, and if I did, everyone will break the line. As he was talking, one jerk pushed me, making me fall to the ground. I wanted to fucking kill that motherfucker, but I was running out of time. Every second was lethal.

I accepted my disrespect and acted to get in line, but I sprinted towards the shore. Soldiers started shouting at me to get back on the island. I ran towards the boat not far away. It was a small commercial boat. I got into the boat and begged the guy, "please take me to the main city"

He answered, "okay mam." He saw my condition, which was bad. My clothes looked like rags, with dark-circled eyes and tangled hair.

He was also German-American, and without asking another thing, he started his boat. I heard guards screaming something in English; it sounded like "Arrest," and yes, their reaction was justified, but the sailor his name was "Viktor Frankl." As written in his some kind of journal . My eyes gave out maybe it was the tiredness I made sure Friedrich was near me . My eyes started closing and I fainted.

Emma fainted out of exhaustion. Frankl, showing mercy, took Emma and Friedrich home. He lived on the 3rd floor of a beaten-up building in a 1-room apartment.As Emma was unconscious, Frankl fed Friedrich with cow's milk.

It was 11:00 PM. Friedrich was sleeping; Emma was still unconscious. Frankl went to sleep as well on the ground next to the bed. Next day, Emma woke up, her heart beating like crazy, as if she had woken up from a nightmare. Friedrich's condition was bad. Frankl saw that Emma had woken up. He asked—Emma asked, "Where is the hospital? Frankl answered, "There is a good hospital named 'Bellevue Hospital' on 26th Street, First Avenue, Manhattan."

Emma started walking towards the door with Friedrich when Frankl, in a concerned voice, asked Emma to wait. Emma, although running out of time, waited. It only took 4 minutes. Frankl came with a handbag.
"What is in this bag?" Emma asked.
Frankl answered, "It's $150. I know it's pretty less, but it's all of my savings."

Emma: "Why are you helping me?"

Frankl: "You... You remind me of someone I used to know. Unfortunately, she isn't with us anymore."

Emma: Hesitantly said, "But it's your savings, Mister."

Frankl: "Just take it already, Emma. You don't have much time."

Emma: "Thank you, Frankl."

Frankl: "If you ever feel the need for my help, you can always come to my house."

I ran towards the hospital. My condition really became bad; my body was burning like fire, I was constantly coughing, and then on the street, I vomited blood. I reconciled with the fact that I may even die. Both of our conditions worsened every moment.

Not very far, I finally saw the hospital. I went inside and talked to the receptionist, but she didn't understand me. I showed her Friedrich, and seeing the bad condition of him, she took Friedrich with her into the test area. While sitting, an old nurse took me to the refuge section. I saw people with severe diseases; some became mentally unstable, some were praying to God to kill them.
That old nurse helped me lay down on a stretcher. She gave me some medicine which didn't give any relief. I knew my time was coming up.

At dawn, that old lady returned to me with some food in her hands. I asked her, "What's your name, Mrs.?"
She replied, "I am Hailey Cooper."
Both of us didn't understand each other, but her expression told me that she might not be able to understand the words, but she did understand what I was trying to say.

Emma: "I might not be able to see tomorrow's sun. If I die, there is a guy named Frankl, Viktor Frankl. I want you to give him my son and say to him that I said sorry I wasn't able to return any of his kindness back. He lives right around the corner."

Hailey: "I sure would."

After some time, the food sat there. I didn't feel like eating. My eyelids started to close on their own. I saw a place, a place where everyone was happy, away from war, destruction, and hate, grief, and that place looked like peace.

I saw an angel; she lowered her hand to grab my hand. I saw a world which I could only imagine. I couldn't open my eyes, or maybe I didn't want to.

Next day, Hailey posted a letter to Frankl telling him about the tragic death of Emma and about the condition of Friedrich. Frankl worked overtime to pay his house's rent, which was still due. At 2:00 AM, he got home after an intense workload. The flag on the mailbox was up, so he checked it, in which he found a letter from Bellevue Hospital by Emma. He read that letter.

Frankl's perspective

I was the only one at her funeral. I wish I could bring Friedrich with me, but his situation was critical.
I didn't have any money left. I was fired from my job, and my angry landlord ordered me to get the fuck out with my stuff. I sold all of my stuff and wandered the streets of New York City. I found myself purposeless.

So I went back to the hospital on the day of the operation. I sat there for 11 hours. After waiting, the doctor came to me, sat next to me, and after taking a deep breath, said, "I am sorry I wasn't able to save Friedrich"

I stood up, grabbed him by his collar, and punched him in his nose.

His nose started to bleed, and a small group gathered around us. I shouted at him, "I didn't become homeless, get fired from my job, and sell everything I had for this child to die , and you are saying he died!"
The doctor shouted back at me, "I tried to save that child, I really did! Do you think I am a monster?"
I had no answer. He excused himself out. I lost the last bit of hope I had left. Once again I had nothing to live for.

The next day, I paid with the last bit of money I had left. I made the gravedigger dig a grave for Friedrich near Emma. I thought I was alone once again. As I was leaving, from a distance I saw an old lady put flowers at Friedrich's and Emma's graves.

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Chapter 9

Negligence

I shouted, "Lukas, you fuckface, I told you that I am not ready for this power!"
I hated myself more than anyone. I heard crying from almost every corner. It felt like they were deceiving me. I started running, running from myself, but I couldn't outrun them. I cannot outrun my thoughts. I shouted at them to leave me alone, and then I slipped and fell on my face, still crying. But then I noticed the cries suddenly fading.

In a familiar voice, I heard my name. I lifted my face; I saw Emma. She lowered her hand to help me get up. I grabbed her hand and hugged her.
I said, "Sorry, Emma. It's all my fault. I am a failure. I tried to change the world, but I am not good enough. I failed to save my hometown, I failed to save my family, I failed to save the lives that could have been saved."

Emma: "It's not your fault, Ethan. You tried to change something that cannot be changed

Ethan: "Emma, but why isn't Friedrich with you , where is he?"

Emma: "He is away—away from the cruelty of this world, the dumb morals, and away from these wars. He is somewhere safe."

Ethan: "Does this kind of place even exist?"

Emma: "It's heaven, Ethan! There is no hell; the only hell is inside humans. We burn from its very own flames every day."

Ethan: "But people on Earth deserve peace."

Emma: "But they can't attain it. Ethan, do you know why an apple is rotten?"

Ethan: "I don't know, but why?"

Emma: "An apple is only rotten because of the germs within it."

Ethan: "I don't get it."

Emma: "You have the power—the power to give people the peace they deserve."

Emma disappeared out of my hand. I shouted out of my lungs, "EMMAAAA!"

Emma, in a way, she was right. At this time, people might look alive, but everyone of them is dead from the inside.I made my mind to do what Emma said—not because I wanted to kill everyone, but because I wanted to separate the good from the bad. On this Earth, both kinds of people live: bad ones like corrupted politicians, killers, thieves, rich goons, and others; and on the good side, there are people like your friend who gave good advice instead of laughing at your weakness, your family who acts like a shield, and random people who are good enough to share their piece of kindness.

The thing is, no matter what, bad people will always overpower the good ones, hence making the good turn bad. My morals have changed, and they changed the person I once was. The past me will never agree to the present me—he would have despised me instead.

There was nothing more I needed to understand. I went up to the well, took out the last coin I had, and threw it into the well. But I saw my reflection—it wasn't me, it was a faint reflection of the past Ethan. But when the coin fell, it broke the reflection of my past self.

I wished

"I want this world to end and give people what they deserve."

It was 5:00 AM. Every country started a nuclear war, launching missiles in every country. People were dead before they knew it. Most of the elderly people died in their sleep.

Through microphones and radios, operators were advising people to live their last few moments with the ones they love. It was the end of the world; everybody knew it.

Then the scene shifted towards Emma and Friedrich, and I walked away. Even though they will get enlightenment, I wasn't brave enough to see them die and scream. Ethan walked away, thinking his wife would cry or scream, but as she saw the bomb getting dropped, she didn't cry . maybe because it wouldn't change anything. And Friedrich too, in Emma's hand, looked a little frightened by the loud sound of the blasts. In her last moments, Emma kissed Friedrich on the forehead, and then the nuclear bomb ended it all.

In a span of 48 hours, every human on Earth died, and most of the industrialization done by humans collapsed.

Chapter 10

Epilogue

In the following years, nature started covering the remains of buildings. Animals who were hiding for decades started coming out. After a very long time, the Earth looked peaceful.

I gave peace to everyone, but I was the one who can never know what peace is. I have mental wars with myself every day. In less than 10 hours, I gave justice to everyone.

Not long after, I heard a familiar voice behind me. "Ethan, Ethan," he said. I looked back; he was Lukas. His mouth showed appreciation for my work through the words,"You did it, ETHAN."but his eyes, they were telling me a different story—they looked sad.

Ethan: "Why are you sad?"

Lukas: "Because it's time—time to say goodbye. I will be faded."

Ethan: "But why didn't you tell me about this rule?"

Lukas: "Because it isn't a rule, Ethan. It's a prophecy my mother made. When someone succeeds in his desire to change their timeline, he becomes the keeper of the Neitherland."

Lukas started fading into golden dust.
I said, "So I also ended your suffering. I always thought that at least you will be with me."
Lukas cut my words, saying, "I am sorry, Ethan. I didn't mean to hit you, but I lost my mind. I am thankful to you; you are the only friend I have. I hope someone will do the same for you what you did for me. You are..."
He faded without completing his sentence.

I have nobody.

THE END
A Novel By M.Farin

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Acknowledgments

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Special thanks to Anand Jha for being the beta reader and giving me honest feedback.

It wasn't only Ethan's journey; it was the journey of every person who cared enough to read my work. As it's my first novel, it may contain many mistakes and plot holes, but in the end, we are all human. We make mistakes, and we correct them. That's what makes us unique.

Thanks for giving my work your time , It means a lot to me

About Author

Mohmmad Farin, also known as M. Farin, is a teenage writer and author born in India in 2009.

He writes about the thin line between good and evil, exploring human morality and the choices that define us. Rather than offering simple answers, he asks one unsettling question:

"Are we becoming the very thing we once stood against?"

Rotten Apple is his debut novel. While his writing may appear simple on the surface, it carries deeper meanings that encourage readers to reflect on themselves and the world around them.

Price of Peace Cannot Be Paid

Rotten Apple is a physiological thriller book set In World War 2. This book mainly focuses on human nature, morals , searching of peace , horrors of the world we live in by following the story of Ethan.

M.Farin